

For Immediate Release
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City Hall Falcon Chicks Named *Mayor Reed Introduces Spirit, Hiko, and Esperanza*

San José, CA – Just in time for their maiden flights, San José Mayor Chuck Reed announced the names of the three City Hall peregrine falcon fledglings: ***Spirit*** (female), ***Hiko*** (male), and ***Esperanza*** (female.) The winning monikers were chosen by Castillero Middle School (Hiko), St. Christopher School (Spirit), and Bret Harte Middle, Discovery Charter, LeyVa Middle, and Morrill Middle (Esperanza).

“The voters have spoken, and San José’s young falcons now have names that reflect their majesty and their return from near-extinction,” said Mayor Reed. “Our local middle school students have done their homework and come up with names that were creative, thoughtful, and fitting for the young birds. We’re all looking forward to seeing Spirit, Hiko, and Esperanza take flight sometime later this week and hoping for a successful fledging.”

San José middle school students were asked to submit names that reflect the endangered birds’ struggle to survive and their unique place in nature. Teachers and student took time out of their busy ‘end-of-year’ schedules to research the falcons. Students learned about falcon habits, habitat, and the obstacles they encounter everyday, then they nominated names reflecting their research on the majestic birds. The winning names were chosen by the San Jose Peregrine Falcon Discussion Group, an online forum of more than 950 members dedicated to the City Hall Falcons.

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Esperanza received the most votes and was the most-nominated name. Four schools decided on the name *Esperanza* which means ‘hope’ in Spanish, reflecting the hope that peregrine falcons which were near extinction will flourish as a species. *Hiko*, short for Shina-Tsu-Hiko, the Japanese God of Wind, was selected because falcons are the fastest moving creature on earth, reaching speeds up to 200 mph when diving. Students chose *Spirit* because the new little falcon will have “to have a true and powerful spirit to succeed.” So now the chicks, formerly known as 12Z, 71P and 05R, are officially named Spirit, Hiko and Esperanza.

The winning schools will receive commendation at a future City Council meeting and a school assembly in the fall with UC Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Group’s Glenn Stewart and one of his tame falcons. They will also experience the thrill of watching *their* bird learn to leave the nest and, hopefully, soar the San Jose skies.

Birders and falcon fans will gather online and on the ground over the coming week for the next milestone – fledging. By the second week in June, Spirit, Hiko and Esperanza will have all their feathers and begin trying to fly. The UC Santa Cruz researchers and trained volunteers will be monitoring this process to help ensure successful flight.

For more information on the City Hall falcons, the list of entries and voting results go to

<http://www.sanjoseca.gov/Falcons/index.asp> .

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